



High-Quality Early Care and Education Strengthens Arkansas Children and Families

God created the family to be the primary place for educating a child on how he or she is to live. Values are taught and nurtured within the context of the family (Dt. 6:4-9; Ps. 78:5-8; Pro. 1; Eph. 6:4; 2 Tim. 1:5). However, some parents experience more difficulty with child rearing than others, lacking resources or the support of a spouse to raise their children on a path towards lives of health and opportunity. That's why services that strengthen children and families, such as high-quality early care and education programs, have the power to transform the lives of disadvantaged children.

High-Quality Early Care and Education Can Strengthen Children and Families

Research shows that high-quality early learning programs can help children get a good start in life, engage parents in their children's education, and help children grow up to have strong families of their own:

- The Arkansas Better Chance pre-K program improved children's literacy and math scores, with benefits sustained through second grade for literacy, language and math scores, and through third grade for literacy. Children who

attended the program were less likely to be held back in school by the end of 3rd grade than those who didn't attend any pre-K.¹

- A longitudinal study of over 1,300 children found that children in higher-quality child care were better prepared for school at age four compared to those in lower-quality care. At age 15, they were still performing slightly above their peers in school and had lower levels of behavior problems.²
- Children who participated in the Chicago Child-Parents Centers preschool program had higher levels of education and higher incomes by age 28. They also had lower rates of serious crime.³
- Participants in the Abecedarian child care and preschool program were 42 percent less likely to have babies before the age of 20.⁴ They were also four times more likely

“Then I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will lead you with knowledge and understanding.”

to earn a college degree, 42 percent more likely to have been consistently employed by age 30, and 80 percent less likely to have used public assistance for extended periods of time.⁵

Conclusion

Arkansas pastors and ministry leaders are already working to strengthen families and

help children in their own communities. But they need help from policymakers to ensure vulnerable children have access to high-quality early learning programs. Maintaining investments in these programs is necessary to help disadvantaged children live up to their God-given potential; make positive contributions to society; and someday raise strong, healthy families of their own.

1 Jung, K., Barnett, W. S., Hustedt, J. T., Francis, J. (2013, May). Longitudinal effects of the Arkansas Better Chance Program: Findings from first through fourth grade. <http://nieer.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Arkansas20Longitudinal20Report20May2013n.pdf>

2 Vandell et al. (2010). Do effects of early child care extend to age 15 years? <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2938040/>

3 Reynolds, A. J., Temple, J. A., Ou, S., Arteaga, I. A., & White, B. A. B. (2011, June). Science. School-based early childhood education and age-28 well-being: Effects by timing, dosage, and subgroups. <http://science.sciencemag.org/content/early/2011/06/08/science.1203618>

4 Campbell, F. A., Ramey, C. T., Pungello, E. P., Sparling, J., & Miller-Johnson, S. (2002). Early childhood education: Young adult outcomes from the Abecedarian Project. *Applied Developmental Science*, 6, 42-57. <http://fpg.unc.edu/resources/early-childhood-education-young-adult-outcomes-abecedarian-project>

5 Campbell, F. A., Pungello, E. P., Burchinal, M., Kainz, K., Pan, Y., Wasik, B. H., Ramey, C. T. (2012). Adult outcomes as a function of an early childhood educational program: An Abecedarian Project follow-up. *Developmental Psychology*, 48, 1033-1043. <https://fpg.unc.edu/node/4083>

Shepherding the Next Generation

Evangelical pastors and ministry leaders calling for biblically-based and effective approaches to strengthen families and communities.

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